CHAPTER 17

# IRISH ENGLISH IN GALWAY CITY

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## 17.1 Introduction

Urban speech varieties of English in the Republic of Ireland have gained rather little attention in sociolinguistic research in the past, with the prominent exception of Dublin English. In contrast to the rich array of studies of urban Irish English in Northern Ireland (see Hickey, Chapter 11 this volume), there are very few systematic sociolinguistically oriented and/or corpus-based studies of urban Irish English in Cork city (see Bessell, Chapter 18 this volume) or, in fact, in any other larger town in the Republic of Ireland. Irish English in Galway City only began featuring in sociolinguistic research more recently, with a general focus on the phonology of the variety. (Two exceptions worth mentioning are Kallen's 2009 and Kallen and Ní Dhonnacha's (2010) analysis of linguistic landscaping in Galway City; see section 17.5.) While Collins (1997) and Peters (2009; 2012; 2013) examined a number of phonological features of the inner-city varieties of Claddagh/*An Cladach* and Bohermore/*An Bóthar Mór* respectively, cross-city variability was in focus for Sell (2009; 2012) and Peters (2016) for parts of the vowel and consonant systems. While especially the latter three studies have produced detailed variationist sociolinguistic insights into linguistic and social factors underlying feature variability in Galway City, a comprehensive account of the phonological properties of the variety has yet to be provided. At the same time, existing descriptions of western Irish English phonology are largely based upon (hence also framed by) accounts that exist for the one more prominent variety of urban Southern Irish English, i.e. Dublin English (e.g. Hickey 2005), as well as by many dialectologically oriented accounts providing incomplete or piecemeal evidence of pronunciation features of rural and urban southern and/or western varieties of Irish English (Henry 1957; 1958; Delahunty 1977; Wells 1982; Ó Baoill 1997; Ó hÚrdail 1997a; 1997b; Hickey 2007a; 2007b; 2008; Moylan 2008; Hughes et al. 2012; Kallen 2013).

In light of both the achievements and desiderata outlined above, the present chapter is structured as follows in order to respond to three major aims: firstly, it provides a concise account of the historical roots of Irish English in Galway City as well as the persisting and intensive contact between Irish and English in a complex urban bilingual setting over eight centuries (see section 17.3). Secondly, the chapter provides a comprehensive overview of vowel and consonant features of Irish English in Galway City that are characteristic of the city's soundscape, and that have been found to exhibit patterns of variation and/or change with a view to social categories such as age, sex/gender, and social status group (see section 17.4). Finally, the chapter addresses the question 'What makes Irish English in Galway City typically Galwegian?', opening up a discussion of possible directions that third-wave sociolinguistic research may take in combining the cognitive and variationist sociolinguistic frameworks with corpus linguistic methods (see section 17.5).

## 17.2 Galway City

The city of Galway (Ir. *Cathair na Gaillimhe*) is a commercial, industrial, administrative, and educational centre located on the banks of the river Corrib at the mid-western Atlantic coast of the Republic of Ireland (see Map 17.1). With an urban population of 83,456 in 2022 (Central Statistics Office 2022) and an estimated population of 98,700 by the year 2022 (Galway City Council 2017), the city is a fast-growing urban agglomeration, and is preceded only by Dublin City (Ir. *Cathair Bhaile Átha Cliath*), Cork City (Ir. *Cathair Chorcaí*), and Limerick City (Ir. *Cathair Luimnigh*). Galway City has experienced considerable growth of population and, as a consequence, an extensive urban sprawl, both historically but especially in more recent times. Historically, periods of economic growth and prosperity as well as periods of stagnation and recession repeatedly gave way to one another and left their marks upon the city in what can be roughly divided into three major formative periods: Old Galway (1100–1600), Early Modern Galway (1600–1900), and Modern Galway (1900–today). Old Galway was characterized by the conquest of the native Irish settlement called *Baile an tSrutháin* ('the town of the stream') and its castle, *Dún Bhun na Gaillimhe* ('fortress at the mouth of the river Galway') by the Anglo-Normans in 1232 and the subsequent growth of the now Anglo-Norman settlement. This development was accompanied by increasing trade relations with other port cities in Europe and the Americas and growing prosperity until about 1600. Early Modern Galway then was marked by receding trade relations and decreasing prosperity brought about by the Irish rebellion against England and the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century. It experienced economic stagnation and accelerating in-migration from surrounding rural areas due to poverty until about 1820 as well as the Famine years (1845–8) and subsequent economic recession, which resulted in widespread pauperism and catastrophic losses among the population due to starvation and mass emigration until

about 1900. Modern Galway in turn was characterized by slow economic recovery between the 1930s and the 1970s and by accelerated economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s. It experienced the economic boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, with widespread social prosperity, and again considerable population growth caused by in-migration from the surrounding areas and immigration from all over the world. In contrast, however, it also experienced the economic downturn of the late 2000s and early 2010s. Eventually, this recession gave way to steady economic recovery and continuing population growth due to in-migration and immigration well into the 2020s (for more detailed accounts, see Hardiman 1820; O'Sullivan 1942; O'Dowd 1985; Murray 1993; Mannion 2012; Peters 2016).

**MAP 17.1** Map of the city of Galway and its main divisions in 2023

## 17.3 A social history of Irish English in Galway City

The development of English in Galway spans a time of roughly eight centuries, and is a story of language contact, variation, and change. In fact, at no point in the city's history was English the sole language of the population, even though it has been associated with high social prestige for more than 600 years. The language of both high (H) and low (L) domains spoken in *Baile an tSrutháin*, i.e. pre-Anglo-Norman Galway, and in its hinterland were varieties of late Middle (900–1200) or early Modern Irish (1200–today). For the settlement proper, this changed with the Anglo-Norman conquest of *Dún Bhun*

*na Gaillimhe* in 1232, with Norman French now becoming 'the language of law, literature, polite society, commerce, and civic government' (O'Sullivan 1942: 451) until about the end of the thirteenth century. However, it is unknown for precisely how long Norman French was spoken in Galway City, as it is not until 1484 that municipal records appear, and these are written almost entirely in English (O'Sullivan 1942: 450). The absence of evidence from the time between 1232 and 1484 renders it impossible to assess in which domains and with which degree of bi- or multilingualism Norman French remained in use in Galway, and to which extent English already played a role. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that bilingualism/multilingualism were widespread for two reasons: firstly, the Anglo-Norman settlers were a group of people marked by great linguistic heterogeneity. Hickey (2007a: 50) observes that this group did not only comprise military leaders, i.e. 'the ruling landlords', of Anglo-Norman descent but also English speakers, Welsh speakers, and Flemish speakers occupying lower ranks. However, 'the English had a greater status vis-à-vis the Welsh and Flemish' and '[t]he latter groups may have continued to use their native language for a time but without any influence on the remaining languages' (Hickey 2007a: 48). Secondly, Galway emerged as an Anglo-Irish enclave in the middle of an existing Irish-speaking tradition (Mannion 2012: 139–40). While Irish was not used in H domains and was not a home language within Galway's city walls, it remained 'the speech of the colony's immediate neighbours' (O'Sullivan 1942: 452) both in H(igh) and L(ow) domains, with some of the native settlements such as Claddagh village (Ir. *An Cladach*) to the west and Menlo village (Ir. *Mionlach*) to the north-east, thriving in direct proximity to the city. In fact, it seems that Irish exerted quite some influence on the Anglo-Norman rulers in Galway, to the extent that they started to adopt their own language and customs to the surrounding Irish from the early fourteenth century onwards (Hardiman 1820: 56). This change from Norman French to Irish among the ruling classes all over Ireland is known as 'Gaelicization', and resulted in a somewhat alienated position for the remaining group of wealthy English-speaking merchant families such as the Blake family[1] in Galway. Although their lifestyles were firmly oriented towards the old English homeland (O'Dowd 1985: 2), their economic survival depended almost entirely on the Irish hinterland. They thus found themselves in a dichotomy that was to become a key factor in the cultural and social linguistic development of Galway over many centuries.

Even though Irish superseded Norman French as the language of H domains in both rural and urban places all over Ireland, English had finally established itself as the language of prestige in the city of Galway by the early fifteenth century. Four Blake family papers written between 1430 and 1449 can be regarded as the first specimen of Irish English in Galway City. They are written in what O'Sullivan (1942: 452) calls some 'quaint but very clear' form of Middle English, 'if anything, more flexible than that of

[1] The Blakes were one of the so-called 'tribes' of Galway, i.e. one of the 14 merchant families that dominated the political, economic, and societal landscape of the city between the 14th and the 19th centuries (see e.g. Hardiman 1820; O'Sullivan 1942; O'Dowd 1985).

many similar written documents of contemporary England'. The following extract from the first Blake family paper from 1430 (taken from O'Flaherty 1864: 203) gives an impression of English in Galway in the first half of the fifteenth century:

(1) Knowynge be thus to alle men yn time to comyng that y henry Blake and Walter Blake custumers of þ$^{e}$ Kyng & John Reede countroller of þ$^{e}$ porte of þ$^{e}$ Galvy & of Slego haye ymade delyveraunce to Saunder lynche et Davy Botyller vi. marc x$^{s}$. [ . . . ] In þe wyttenes Soverayne and of þe Galvy & many mo. And her to þe for sayde Saunder and Davy have put to har seals. Iwrote at þe Galvy þe xx$^{ti}$. Day of August. The zere regnyng of Kyng henry þe VI. after þe conquest þe viii. ȝer.

[Thus may it be known to all men in times to come that I, Henry Blake, and Walter Blake, tradesmen of the King and John Reede, customs accountant of the ports of Galway and Sligo, have made deliverance of six marks and ten shillings to Saunder Lynche and Davy Botyller. [ . . . ] Witnessed by the Sovereign and by Galway and many more. And hereto the foresaid Saunder and Davy have put their seals. Written at Galway the twentieth day of August. In the eighth year of the reign of King Henry VI after the conquest. (translation AP)]

While the Blake family papers deliver proof for English being the language of one influential Galwegian merchant family, the records of the Corporation of Galway of 1484 confirm the establishment of English as the language of the whole city. These records were mainly written in English and contained only marginal instances of Latin, while providing ample evidence for the relative modernization that English in Galway had undergone (Examples 2 and 3) since its first orthographic appearance in the Blake family manuscripts.

(2) That no man of this corporation be served with any writ or process until the matter be first tried by the mayor and council of this town, *sub poena* 20*l.* (1486, Galway Corporation, Liber A, Hardiman 1820: 198)

(3) If any man should bring any Irishman to brage or boste upon the towne, to forfeit 12*d.* That no man of this town shall oste or receive into ther housses at Christemas, Easter nor no feaste elles, any of the Burks, M'Williams, the Kellies, nor no cepte elles, withoute license of the mayor and councill, on payn to forfeit 5*l.* that neither O' ne Mac shall strutte ne swaggere thro' the streets of Gallway. that no freeman quit the town without license from the mayor, *sub paena* 20*s.* (1518, Galway Corporation, Liber A, Hardiman 1820: 201)

With Norman French demonstrably gone from the city by 1484, what remained was a diglossic situation involving English and Irish, as the location of English-speaking Galway in an Irish-speaking country made it an economic necessity for Galwegians to have at

least a working knowledge of Irish (O'Sullivan 1942: 453; Peters 2016: 37; for the broader Irish perspective, see Kallen 2013: 13–18).

The relationship between English-speakers from Galway and Irish-speakers from the surrounding areas remained a complicated issue until well into the eighteenth century. Numerous by-laws enacted by the Corporation of Galway between 1486 and 1779 give evidence of the struggle of the 'Old English' Galwegians to draw a line between themselves and the 'native' Irish by keeping them outside the confines of the city (see Example 3). However, by the mid-eighteenth century numerous so-called 'Irish' quarters started to grow in direct adjacency to the city walls. Today's areas of Bohermore (Ir. *An Bóthar Mór*), Eyre Square (Ir. *An Fhaiche Mhór*), Woodquay (Ir. *Barr an Caladh*), Newtownsmith (Ir. *Baile Nua Mhic Gabhann*), Dominick Street (Ir. *Sráid Dhoiminic*), and Merchants Road (Ir. *Bóthar na gCeannaithe*) all began as Irish quarters. They were housing both speakers of English who had moved from the overcrowded city and speakers of Irish who had moved from the hinterland. With this, these quarters provided a much more hospitable ground for Irish–English language contact (for a detailed description see Peters 2016: 48–68). In fact, there is evidence for Irish exerting a considerable and long-lasting influence on the development of English in Galway. Ó Dochartaigh (1984: 70–71) observes that 'the 1651 map shows that the Irish language had greatly influenced the place names within the town',[2] with many landmarks in Galway bearing anglicized versions of Irish names. For about 200 years, English and Irish existed alongside each other in Galway City, creating a social space with widespread bilingualism and intensive language contact. The English that developed here, just as in the rural areas, was that of the early modern period, and was shaped to some degree by uncontrolled second language acquisition and intensive transfer between Irish and English on all levels of the linguistic system (see e.g. Hickey 2007a; 2008; Kallen 2013). Despite the loss of native Irish speakers due to starvation and emigration during the Great Famine of 1845–8 (cf. Hindley 1990: 13–20), Irish seems to have remained an integral part of the city's linguistic ecology. Commenting on the time around 1890, Ó Dochartaigh (1984: 71) states:

(4) San am úd bhí leathbhróg Ghealach agus leathbhróg Ghallda á gcaitheamh ag muintir na Gaillimhe, agus ba chuma leo cé acu teanga a labhróidís, Béarla nó Gaeilge; agus bhí an Ghaeilge ar fheabhas an domhain ag go leor acu, ag siopadóirí, ag lucht dlí, ag dochtúirí agus ag an lucht oibre ar fad.
[At that time the people of Galway were wearing one Irish and one foreign shoe, and they did not care which language was spoken, English or Irish; and many of them spoke the world's best Irish, shopkeepers, lawyers, doctors and the whole working-class. (translation AP)]

[2] 'Léiríonn léarscáil 1651 [ … ] go raibh an Ghaeilge tar éis dul i bhfeidhm go mór ar áitainmneacha an bhaile'. (Ó Dochartaigh 1984: 70; translation AP)

However, by the time of the 1911 Census, it transpires that only population groups aged 40+ and only in some parts of the city still claimed to be speakers of English and Irish, while younger age groups appear to have been English-speaking only (National Archives of Ireland 2021). With the destruction of the old Claddagh/*An Cladach* in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Irish language lost one of its remaining strongholds in the city, largely giving way to the situation as it stands today (see e.g. O'Dowd 1993: 16–19; Peters 2016: 52–3). According to the 2016 Census, only 4.3% of Galway's population claimed to be daily speakers of Irish, while more than two-fifths of Galwegians claimed to have 'some knowledge of the language' (Central Statistics Office 2016). With this, Irish English has been the strongest home language in Galway City for most of the twentieth century, and continues to be the dominant language in the city. In addition, the 2016 Census also records that almost one-fifth of Galwegians are non-Irish nationals, with large linguistic communities from western, central, and eastern Europe as well as from Africa, South America, and Asia, contributing a broad variety of home languages to the soundscape of twenty-first-century Galway.

## 17.4 Contemporary Irish English in Galway City

Irish English in Galway City has been classified as an urban variety of western Southern Irish English (Peters 2016), which makes it somewhat different from rural varieties of Southern Irish English on the one hand and from varieties of Southern Irish English in the east, south-east, south-west, and in the Midlands on the other hand. These geographical distinctions are motivated both historically and structurally and receive comprehensive treatment in, for example, Hickey (2007a), Corrigan (2010), and Kallen (2013). However, in many previous linguistic accounts, the west and the south-west of Ireland are treated as one large dialectal area (e.g., Filppula 1999: 34; Hickey 2007b: 143), which may be mistaken as evidence for a lack of distinctive features between the varieties spoken in these regions. Nevertheless, it needs to be pointed out that, despite Henry's (1958) attempt at initiating a comprehensive study of dialect features of Southern Irish English and Hickey's (2004a) compilation of *A Sound Atlas of Irish English*, a large-scale and contemporary assessment of dialect boundaries in the Republic remains a desideratum. Hence, the absence of distinctions between the west and the south-west as well as between urban and rural spaces within these regions does not imply an absence of (potential) linguistic differences.

### 17.4.1 Phonetic features of Irish English in Galway City

As illustrated in section 17.2, English in Galway City looks back at a history of development and contact that spans some 800 years. Linguistic interest in features of

the variety, however, has been a much more recent phenomenon. In fact, English in the west of Ireland, in Connacht or in Galway City specifically, has featured much less prominently in linguistic research than, for instance, English in Dublin, south-eastern Irish English, English in Belfast, and Northern Irish English. The following short and anecdotal side-note remark by Joyce (1991 [1910]: 95) can be counted as one of the first references to English in Galway (city) in a publication with a linguistic focus:

> Many years ago I knew a fine old gentleman from Galway. He wished to make people believe that in the old fighting times, when he was a young man, he was a desperate *gladiaathor*; but he really was a gentle creature who never in all his born days hurt man or mortal.

While this short passage allows a glimpse into both the vowel and the consonant space of (one speaker of) English in Galway in the early twentieth century, it is primarily diagnostic of the approach that usually was taken towards varieties and variation during the time. In this approach, an anecdote of a passage of speech once overheard usually was deemed sufficient evidence for the existence of a feature—and the speech reported tended to come from so-called NORMs, i.e. non-mobile, older, rural males (cf. Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 29). More comprehensive dialectological accounts of English in Ireland's west region/Connacht only start appearing from the late 1950s onwards. Most of these, however, only address scattered phonological and morpho-syntactic properties, and few actually mention Galway City, hence allowing speculative inferences about features of English in Galway City only (see Henry 1957; 1958; Wells 1982; Ó Baoill 1997; Ó hÚrdail 1997a; 1997b; Hickey 2007b; 2008; Moylan 2008; Hughes et al. 2012; Kallen 2013). However, with the advent of the more recent approaches of sociolinguistics, such as 'third-wave' sociolinguistics (Eckert 2012), to Ireland in recent years, more systematic and empirically grounded analyses of Irish English start appearing, also for Galway City. While Collins (1997) and Peters (2009; 2012; 2013) conduct studies of social networks and communities of practice in the inner-city areas of Claddagh/*An Cladach* and Bohermore/*An Bóthar Mór* respectively, Sell (2009; 2012) and Peters (2016) focus on large-scale sampling and cross-city variability with a view to analysing parts of the vowel and consonant systems of Irish English in Galway City. Especially the latter three studies have produced detailed variationist insights into linguistic and social factors underlying feature variability in Galway City. Overall, it is noteworthy that most data-based attestations of features of contemporary Irish English in Galway City come from the 2000s and 2010s, showing how interest in the variety has accelerated over the past ten to fifteen years. Tables 17.1 and 17.2 summarize the status quo of original research on vowel and consonant features of Irish English in Galway City.

**Table 17.1 Attested vowel features of Irish English in Galway City**

| Lexical set | Realized as | Originally attested in |
|---|---|---|
| PEN/NEXT/ELSE | [ɪ], [ɛ] | Peters 2012; Kallen 2013 |
| HAPPY | [ə], [əi] | Henry 1958; Peters 2012 |
| GOAT/HOME | [oː], [ɔ], [ou] | Collins 1997; Peters 2009; 2012 |
| FACE/NAME | [eː], [ɛ] | Peters 2012 |
| START | [æ] | Hickey 2007a/b; Peters 2009 |
| CHOICE | [ɑɪ], [ɒɪ], [ɔɪ] | Sell 2009 |
| LOT | [ɑ], [ɒ] | Sell 2009 |
| THOUGHT | [ɑː], [ɒː], [ɔː] | Sell 2009 |
| STRUT | [ɒ], [ʊ] | Peters 2012 |
| FILM/FARM | [ə]-epenthesis | Sell 2012 |

**Table 17.2 Attested consonant features of Irish English in Galway City**

| Lexical set | Realized as | Originally attested in |
|---|---|---|
| SKIN/SLOW/SMALL/ SNOW/STOP | [ʃ] | Peters 2009 |
| THIN/FAITH | [t], [t̪], [t̪$^{\theta}$], [θ] | Ó hÚrdail 1997b; Peters 2012; 2013; 2016 |
| THEN/BREATHE | [d], [d̪], [d̪$^{ð}$], [ð] | Ó hÚrdail 1997b; Peters 2012; 2013; 2016 |

While both tables mostly confirm the existence of well-known diachronic or synchronic features of Southern Irish English for Galway City, they also attest quite some variability in the vowel and consonant space of the variety. This is an effect mainly due to the variationist sociolinguistic approach chosen by the studies by Sell (2009; 2012) and Peters (2009; 2012; 2013; 2016) and, to some extent, the study by Collins (1997). For these researchers, the main focus was not only on whether certain features were present or absent in Galway City vis-à-vis other varieties of Irish English, but also on the degree of variability these features had in correlation with social factors such as social network, community of practice, neighbourhood, age group, sex/gender, and socio-economic status. With this, they were able to confirm the coexistence of different realizations of variables in lexical sets such as GOAT/HOME, CHOICE, THOUGHT, THIN/FAITH, and THEN/BREATHE, while being able to assign social meaning to different variants and deliver proof for or against language change in progress.

## 17.4.2 Mapping variation and change in Irish English in Galway City

This section illustrates patterns of variation and change that have emerged among vowel and consonant features of Irish English in Galway City (as summarized in Tables 17.1 and 17.2).

### 17.4.2.1 *PEN/NEXT/ELSE*

The earliest evidence for the existence of /ɛ/-raising (PEN/PIN merger) in Galway City comes from a metalinguistic commentary in one of the Blake family manuscripts from 1430, i.e., 'kettle vocatur cittel', remarking on a local tendency for the raising of /ɛ/ to /ɪ/ in the word (or words having phonetic environments for /ɛ/ similar to that in) *kettle* (O'Sullivan 1942: 543). Possible origins for this widely attested feature in historical Irish English have been located in Irish-language admixture, retention of a pre-Great Vowel Shift raised vowel, or language universals (O'Sullivan 1942; Wells 1982; Ó Baoill 1997; Hickey 2007a; 2007b; 2008; Kallen 2013). While in Irish English the raising has changed its context of realization from unconditioned to conditioned (Hickey 2007a; 2007b), i.e. from a range of phonological environments as in *fresh*, *next*, *devil*, and *kettle* to only those that have /ɛ/ preceding a nasal consonant as in *them*, *friend(ship)*, and *remember*,' Kallen (2013: 66–7) finds that in Galway (city) /ɛ/-raising in post-nasal and non-nasal environments such as 'in [nɪkst] next and [ɪls] else is also not uncommon'. A study of English as spoken in the Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór* district of Galway City conducted by Peters (2012) finds that raising of /ɛ/ to /ɪ/ preceding a nasal consonant seems to be more prominent among speakers aged 50+. For this age group, the sample shows raising to occur in some 36% of all tokens as opposed to about 15% of all tokens among speakers aged 25–49. These results underpin the fact that /ɛ/-raising in Galway City, just as in the west and south-west of Ireland in general, seems to be on the retreat.

### 17.4.2.2 *HAPPY*

Henry (1958: 141) reports that a vowel off-glide [əi] in final position was a 'characteristic value of final unstressed -y in N. Connacht', and [ə] was typical in North Galway. Based on findings from a number of smaller towns and villages in Co. Galway, he infers that the realization of an item like *journey* in Galway (City) could very likely be ['dʒəˑːnə] or ['dʒəˑːnəi]. This is confirmed by Peters (2012: 36), whose analysis of the vowel space of Galway's Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór* district returns a number of tokens for final vowel diphthongization in the HAPPY lexical set, including ['hæpeɪ] 'happy', ['ɹiːleɪ] 'really', ['lʌvleɪ] 'lovely', and ['kʌntɹeɪ] 'country'. As the off-glide occurs in only between 10% and 18% of all tokens and seems to be slightly more prominent among speakers aged 40+, the variant could arguably be interpreted either as having low-frequency stability or as being subject to change vis-à-vis the realization [i] in those varieties of English which show HAPPY-tensing (Wells 1982: 257–8).

#### 17.4.2.3 *GOAT/HOME and FACE/NAME*

The monophthongal realization of the diphthongs in GOAT/LOT as [oː] and [ɔ] and in FACE/DRESS as [eː] and [ɛ] in most dialects of Southern Irish English has been discussed extensively (see e.g. Lass 1990; Kallen 2013). As an exception to the general rule, however, diphthongal values such as [oʊ] and [əʊ] are reported for Dublin English (Wells 1982; Hickey 2005; Lonergan 2013).

First evidence for the monophthongal value of the nucleus in Irish English in Galway City comes from the 'Statute Book of the Town of Galway', which records one instance of the lexical item *gottes* (=goats) as early as 1509.[3] Surprisingly, Collins' (1997) study of the Claddagh/*An Cladach* district of Galway City finds that the use of diphthongal [oʊ] 'is common in both casual and formal speech styles' among three different generations of speakers aged 12–90 (1997: 153). Collins finds that speakers aged 20–40 (generation B) are leading a possible sound change in progress, with an average of 35% of all tokens in casual style being diphthongized (vis-à-vis some 28% in generation A and some 20% in generation C). She regards this development as being linked to the dense and multiplex Claddagh/*An Cladach* social network. Interestingly, instances of (o)-diphthongization are also described for Galway's Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór* district by Peters (2009; 2012), returning very low usage rates (between 12% and 0%) for [oʊ] in the formal and casual styles of all speakers. In Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór*, [oː] and [ɔ] are predominantly used in the GOAT and HOME lexical sets and, on the basis of a very limited sample, seem to point to little variation.

#### 17.4.2.4 *START*

Hickey (2007a: 328; 2007b: 145) states that the monophthong [ɑ] in START is realized as tense, raised [æ] in vernacular varieties in an area along a line between south and west from Cork through Limerick up to Galway and Sligo—just as much as in eastern varieties of Irish English. In fact, raising of [ɑ] in items such as [stæːɹt] 'start', [hæːɹt] 'heart', and [kæːɹ] 'car' is also attested in Peters' (2009) data from Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór*. With speakers aged 20–40 and speakers aged 40–60 both realizing the variant, age does not seem to be the main or sole factor determining the variants' use. Instead, the three more local speakers seem to have higher frequencies than the one speaker who recently moved into a neighbouring district of Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór*, which could support Hickey's argument of vernacularity but which could also speak for a network-based interpretation or both.

#### 17.4.2.5 *THOUGHT, LOT, and CHOICE*

In a cross-city study of variability in Galway, Sell (2009) discusses changes affecting the vowels in the THOUGHT, LOT, and CHOICE lexical sets. She analyses a number of vowel variants for each phonetic environment in order to establish the extent to which these

[3] Whether the double <tt> in the word indicates a long monophthong [oː] or a short monophthong [ɔ], however, remains disputed (see Henry 1958: 65 vs Hickey 2007a: 64).

variants correlate with social variables such as age and gender, as well as the extent to which they deliver evidence for incoming variants. For THOUGHT, she finds that [ɑː], [ɒː], and [ɔː] appear in Galway City speech, while the closer realization [oː] as found in advanced non-local Dublin English (Hickey 2004a: 44) does not occur. With unrounded [ɑː] being realized infrequently (about 3%) in Galway English, the majority (about 87%) of tokens are realized as [ɒː]. However, Sell records the occurrence of nine tokens (about 10%) of raised, rounded [ɔː] that appear to be instances of the first stage of the new pronunciation coming in from Dublin English. As the probability of this incoming variant is much higher among young women aged between 18 and 20 (54%) than among young men (10%), this change in progress seems to be a classic example of young women as leaders of language change.

For LOT, Sell finds both [ɑ] and [ɒ], while [ɔ], as found in non-local Dublin English, does not occur in Galway City. The majority of speakers, both old and young, seem to prefer the traditional Galway variant [ɑ], while younger people show a tendency to also use the [ɒ] realization as an approximation to fashionable Dublin English and Standard Southern British English (Sell 2009: 196). At the same time, younger male speakers seem to show a higher probability of realizing [ɒ] (61%) than female speakers (46%); however, the difference is not significant. Since Sell finds that the factor age alone does not seem to account for the patterns in this alleged change in progress, she deems it likely that other independent variables such as social class also play a role.

For CHOICE, Sell finds that [ɑɪ], [ɒɪ], and [ɔɪ] are all used in Galway City speech, while shifted [oɪ], as in non-local Dublin English, does not occur. Younger generations seem to use both [ɒɪ] and [ɔɪ] frequently (about 52% and 37% respectively), whereas the traditional variant [ɑɪ] is much less frequent (about 11%) and appears to be limited to the speech of male and female speakers aged 40+. Again, young women aged 21–34 show a higher probability of using the incoming/innovative variant [ɔɪ] than male speakers in the same age group. Unlike the factor age, however, gender does not prove to be significant, indicating that further independent variables must influence variation.

#### 17.4.2.6 *STRUT*

Peters (2012: 38–40) describes a tendency of local speakers from Galway's Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór* district to realize [ʌ] in STRUT either as centralized [ɐ̈] or as partially raised [ʊ], yielding values for [ʌ] such as in [bɐ̈t̰]/[bʊt̰] 'but', [dʒɐ̈st]/[dʒʊst] 'just', [mɐ̈tʃ]/[mʊtʃ] 'much', and [ɐ̈p]/[ʊp] 'up'. While the phonetic environment of the lowered/raised vowel does not seem to be a determining factor, the actual frequency of lexical items that have lowering/raising points to the possibility of the phenomenon being a case of lexicalization. In total, centralized [ɐ̈], partially raised [ʊ], and standard [ʌ] show a distribution of about 70%, 20%, and 10% respectively, making lowering by far the most prominent realization. Since this distribution does not appear to correlate with speaker age, one possibility of interpretation is stable variation.

#### 17.4.2.7 *Schwa epenthesis*

The resolution of complex consonant clusters in codas such as /lm/, /ln/, /rm/, /rn/, /rl/, or in medial positions such as /tr/ or /bl/, by insertion of central unstressed vowel [ə] has been discussed widely for both rural and urban varieties of Irish English (see e.g. Wells 1982; Ó hÚrdail 1997a; Hickey 2007a). Sell's (2012) study of the phenomenon in Galway City shows that only about 12% of all tokens in her data featured schwa epenthesis, with one lemma, FILM ['filəm], showing extraordinarily high percentages of schwa inclusion (about 77%) as opposed to all other lexical items (about 3%). Sell (2012: 47) establishes a number of factors that determine the likelihood of epenthetic schwa, namely age, formality of speech, and coda position. As the likelihood of the feature is significantly lower among younger people, Sell interprets epenthesis to be subject to change in Galway City. Sell (2012: 63) explains the high frequency of schwa epenthesis in the lemma FILM with the item being a general marker of Irish English identity that many speakers in her study are well aware of and that many of them employ consciously to express their distinct linguistic identity.

#### 17.4.2.8 */s/-palatalization*

/s/-palatalization in items such as [ʃtɑp] 'stop', [ʃloː] 'slow', [ʃnoː] 'snow', [beʃt] 'best', [liʃn̩] 'listen', and [reʃl̩] 'wrestle' has been discussed as an archaic and stigmatized feature of vernacular speech in Gaeltacht and recent Gaeltacht areas, retaining consonant qualities of Irish in English (Ó Baoill 1997: 81; Ó hÚrdail 1997a: 185). Peters' (2009) data from the Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór* district of Galway City features only nine instances of /s/-palatalization in words such as [ʃkræp] 'scrap', [ʃteː] 'stay', and [ʃmɒl] 'small' out of a total of 665 items with a phonetic environment eligible for /s/-palatalization. These nine tokens, however, exclusively occur in 'situations of ridicule and intentional inclusion of pronunciation features of low social prestige' (Peters 2009: 54), i.e. in situations in which the speakers intentionally imitate older members of the rural population for the effect of humour and entertainment. Hence, /s/-palatalization may have the status of a linguistic stereotype, and it may function as a marker of an (archaic) rural Irish and/or Galwegian linguistic identity.

#### 17.4.2.9 *THIN, FAITH and THEN, BREATHE*

The realization of the variables (th) and (dh) in THIN, FAITH and THEN, BREATHE (as well as in THREE and THROUGH) has been subject to broad discussion in linguistic analyses of Northern and Southern Irish English to date. Broadly speaking, alternative variants of the fricatives [θ] and [ð] in the Irish context include the alveolar plosives [t] and [d], the dental plosives [t̪] and [d̪], and the affricates [t̪θ] and [d̪ð]. Previous research has identified both language-internal and contact-induced motivations for TH-fortition both in Irish English and in other World Englishes (see e.g. Dubois and Horvath 1998; Hickey 2007a; Clarke 2010; Bekker and Van Rooy 2015). A number of linguistic and social constraints on (th, dh) variability have been found to be in operation, yielding patterns that may be quite diverse across Ireland. The baseline of the

discussion on realizations of (th) and (dh), however, can be summarized in simple terms as follows: firstly, Southern Irish English, as opposed to Northern Irish English, never has dental fricative realizations of (th) and (dh) with the exception of formal speech styles involving high degrees of self-monitoring and/or conscious efforts at producing variants that carry high social prestige. Secondly, oppositions such as [tʰɪn] *tin* and [t̪ʰɪn] *thin*, [feːt] *fate* and [feːt̪] *faith*, [den] *den* and [d̪en] *then*, [briːd] *breed* and [briːd̪] *breathe* are maintained by distinctions of place of articulation (alveolar vs dental) rather than manner of articulation (fricative vs plosive). Thirdly, affricate realizations of (th, dh) as [t̪θ] and [d̪ð] seem plausible but generally lack substantiation on the basis of empirical data. (For detailed discussions see Henry 1958; Wells 1982; Harris 1997; Ó Baoill 1997; Ó hÚrdail 1997a; 1997b; Hickey 2004a; 2004b; 2005; 2007; 2008; Kallen 2013; Peters 2016).

For the context of Galway, Ó hÚrdail (1997b: 142) finds that 'Galway City has the alveolar plosives for dentals in *thousand*, *thin*, *that*, *then*, *this*, *there's* (homophonous with *dares*); the articulation is dental, however in *draw*, *drive*, *after*, *fodder*, and *matter*', i.e. in the environment of /r/ (Hickey 2004a; 2007b; 2007a). He argues that the generalization of alveolar [t] and [d] is a widespread and continuously growing feature, 'particularly in the case of young speakers' (Ó hÚrdail 1997b: 142). This view, however, is opposed by Hickey (2007b: 78), who states that the use of the dental stops [t̪] and [d̪] in THIN and BREATHE is a 'distinctive feature of the west'. Both these views as well as the baseline assumptions on (th, dh) variability in Irish English (in Galway City) are examined by Peters (2012), who studies generationally stratified female working-class speakers from the district of Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór*. On the one hand, his analysis confirms Hickey's (2007b: 78) view in that there is a general preference for dental [t̪, d̪] over alveolar [t, d]. On the other, his study finds a tendency of speakers to actually realize phonetic [θ, ð] in informal/casual speech styles. In the analysis, only about 60% out of a total of 3,256 tokens are subject to fortition, meaning that about 4 out of 10 lexical items containing (th, dh) are realized with phonetic [θ, ð], a fact strongly contradicting baseline assumptions about (th, dh) variability in Southern Irish English. These findings are substantiated in Peters (2016: 163–87), whose analysis of 4,053 tokens from across the city shows that: (1) speakers aged 30–49 and speakers aged 50–69 from the upper class show high frequencies of standard [θ, ð], namely 63% and 49% respectively; (2) speakers aged 30–49, 50–69, and 70+ both from the middle class and from the working class have solid to high frequencies of non-standard [t̪, d̪] (WC: 30–75%, MC: 32–40%); (3) alveolar [t, d] are more associated with working-class and middle-class speakers aged 50+ than with any other group, peaking at a relatively low 21% for both groups; (4) members of the middle class of all ages fluctuate considerably between fricative and dental plosive realizations, which may be interpreted both as conscious approximation to the extranational norm of England and as dialectal stability; (5) female speakers aged 10–29 from the working class seem to be leading in a change towards higher frequencies of the prestige forms, i.e. the standard fricative realizations [θ, ð]; (6) male speakers aged 20–29 from the middle class appear to be the leaders in a change towards higher frequencies of the affricate variants [t̪θ, d̪ð], which hence may be interpreted as possible candidates

for markers of middle-class identity in Irish English in Galway City. In addition, the study shows that (7) speakers from dense and multiplex working-class neighbourhoods such as Bohermore/*Bóthar Mór*, Claddagh/*An Cladach*, Shantalla/*Seantalamh*, and Newcastle/*An Caisleán Nua* have higher frequencies of dental (37% vs 24%) and alveolar realizations (11% vs 8%) than speakers from middle-class and upper-class neighbourhoods in the rest of the city, who in turn have higher frequencies of fricative (50% vs 39%) and affricate realizations (15% vs 11%). However, only fricative and dental realizations show significant differences across the city's neighbourhoods, pointing to the possibility of these two variants being intra-urban linguistic markers.

## 17.5 Landscapes, identities, and cognition: the future of Irish English research in Galway City

From the discussion so far it is clear that the main linguistic focus on Irish English in Galway City to date has been on phonological commonalities or differences vis-à-vis other varieties of (Southern) Irish English as well as on intra-urban variability in connection with processes of language variation and change. To this day, few attempts have been made at researching morphosyntactic, lexical, or discourse-pragmatic particularities of the variety on an empirical basis. At the same time, phonological interest has begun moving in the direction of the third wave of sociolinguistics (Eckert 2012), with ethnographic observations enabling an analysis of systematic correlations between microsociological local categories and configurations on the one hand and linguistic variability on the other (see Collins 1997; Sell 2009; 2012; Peters 2012; 2016).

In a similar vein, yet moving away from dialectological and variationist approaches, Kallen (2009) and Kallen and Ní Dhonnacha (2010) aptly demonstrate that applying other sociolinguistic perspectives to local configurations in Galway City can contribute to understanding the complex linguistic ecology that multilingual urban spaces contain. In a study of mono- and bilingual signage in Galway City, Kallen (2009)[4] illustrates how tourism, language policy, and linguistic vitality interact in creating a linguistic landscape that accommodates a multitude of communicative acts and that indexes diverse aspects of cultural and linguistic local identity. He finds that a large percentage of sign units in Galway are bilingual Irish-English in both private (41%) and public spheres (44%), bearing witness to the relative significance ascribed to both languages as markers of local linguistic identity. At the same time, his in-depth analysis of both complementary and congruent bilingual signage shows that

[4] Four further examples are discussed in Kallen and Ní Dhonnacha (2010: 24–9), albeit within a line of argumentation different from that in Kallen (2009).

the linguistic landscape of Galway City is a setting where Irish is visible but 'not essential to an understanding of the message, but where the overall image is indexical of the language and, in turn, of the cultural elements which Irish itself indexes' (Kallen 2009: 281). This is a direct reflection of the dichotomy between Irish and English identities in Galway that has been a key issue in the city's linguistic and cultural realities for centuries (as described in section 17.3). Just as knowledge of Irish was an economic necessity in Old Galway, display of Irish in shops and businesses in Modern Galway can be interpreted as 'a self-presentation strategy to influence consumer behaviour' (Kallen and Ní Dhonnacha 2010: 25). This self-presentation may be regarded as being directed at two audiences: members of the cultural in-group (i.e. Galwegians past and present, but also Irish people more generally), who ascribe positive, negative, or neutral values to the visibility and the ample roles/functions of Irish in the city,[5] and members of the cultural out-group (i.e. tourists and visitors), who often hold stereotypical expectations and positive evaluations regarding the presence of Irish in the Irish context more generally. Despite the predominant role that Irish plays in this complex negotiation of cultural semiotic values, one of the future questions posed to sociolinguistic endeavours in Galway City will be to what extent not only Irish but also Irish English encode values of local identities. This question could be approached by way of continuing the types of variationist, second-wave approaches to feature variability as initiated by Collins, Sell, and Peters and/or by way of launching third-wave sociolinguistic investigations into stylistic practices and the underlying social semiotic system they are embedded in (see Eckert 2012: 24).

A third future direction in Irish English research, however, is proposed by Peters (2017), who calls for a cognitive lens in sociolinguistic and corpus-based approaches to variability. Within the purview of cognitive sociolinguistics, large and/or specialized corpora are made the basis of research into patterns of speech at all levels of the linguistic system that express the collective memories, world-views, and values of a particular sociocultural group. Utilizing an analytic toolbox that comprises notions such as *(cultural) keyword*s, *collocations*, *categories*, *schemas*, as well as *conceptual metaphors* and *metonymies*, the cognitive sociolinguistic approach to language corpora seeks to retrieve significant cultural-cognitive information. Such information can involve differences between, for example, the lexicons of varieties of English that express differing conceptualizations regarding sociocultural realities in which a particular group of speakers find themselves (see e.g. Kallen 1997; Wierzbicka 1997; Kirk 2009; Wolf and Polzenhagen 2009; Kirk and Kallen 2011; Sharifian 2017; Wolf, Polzenhagen, and Peters 2017). Peters (2017) demonstrates the applicability of this approach to the context of Irish English. While mainly basing his analysis on data from ICE-Ireland (collected between 1999 and 2005), he also draws on the *Corpus of Galway City Spoken English* (CGCSE; collected between 2008 and 2010) in order to substantiate uses of English in Ireland that

[5] For a more comprehensive outline of (historical) attitudes towards Irish and Irish English, see Hickey (2007a: 19–24).

express notions of Irish sociocultural identity.[6] While the CGCSE is a relatively small corpus of about 125,000 words, it is a specialized collection of ethnographic interviews that may serve as a starting point for researching patterns of language use that express a type of local Galwegian cultural cognition. In other words, this approach focuses on the question 'What makes Irish English in Galway City typically Galwegian?' or 'Which linguistic elements reflect cognitive patterns shared by members of the cultural in-group on the local level?' While the discussion of the phonology of contemporary Irish English in Galway City in section 17.4 has yielded a number of features and processes that are more or less characteristic of some neighbourhoods of the city or some social strata of its population, with the data at hand it is impossible to state from the perspective of language perception to what extent these features carry social and/or cultural meaning among members of the cultural in-group. In other words, phonological features may or may not be typically Galwegian, but the social and cultural categories they index on the local level (in the sense of Kristiansen 2003) remain to be uncovered.

Lexical features, on the other hand, may be much more straightforward in referencing local identity and meaning, simply because they may be unique to a place and their sociocultural meaning may be decipherable only from an in-group (or an informed out-group) perspective. For example, the CGCSE contains a wide range of toponyms and geonyms that are endowed with local knowledge and meaning, social and cultural importance, and, from an anthropological perspective, with 'certain conventional ways of imagining and interpreting [ … ] the past' (Basso 1996: xv). Hence, typically Galwegian placenames such as Bohermore/*An Bóthar Mór*, Claddagh/*An Cladach*, Knocknacarra/*Cnoc na Cathrach*, Newcastle/*Caisleán Nua*, and Doughiska/*Dabhach Uisce* are constructed within a contextualized naming system (cf. Peters and van Hattum 2021) and carry inherent word-meanings that reference perceptions and descriptions that were deemed relevant in the historical development of these places: *An Bóthar Mór* remains 'the big road' that enters Galway's city centre from the east, and *Cnoc na Cathrach* remains the western 'hill of the city'. *An Cladach*, however, is not quite 'the seashore' on the western banks of the river Corrib it used to be, but has become a fully regulated and embanked riparian strip. Similarly, *Caisleán Nua* and *Dabhach Uisce* have lost the features that once defined them, i.e. a 'new castle' and a 'water pond' respectively. These inherent word meanings and references are accessible for anyone speaking Irish, and may well be known to any person from Galway even if they do not have a command of the language. From a cognitive sociolinguistic perspective, however, the above place names carry a further type of meaning because they index categorical and schematic knowledge shared by the local community about events, actors, social and linguistic behaviours, etc. relating to these places. Hence, the place names carry not only inherent but also sociocultural-evaluative meaning in the form of perceptions of the

[6] His examples from Galway include uses of the lemmas FAIRY, NUN, and CHURCH from generationally stratified speakers of Irish English, and they substantiate both the persevering and the renegotiating character of cultural conceptualizations in Irish English across generations (Peters 2017: 138–43).

areas themselves and attitudes towards people who live in these parts of Galway. These evaluations are extractable from local language corpora such as the CGCSE, and surface in descriptions as in Examples (5) and (6).

(5) Doughiska–people'd call it Polishka because there's a lot of Polish people in there. [female informant, aged 31, Bohermore; CGCSE: GAL-BM-DC001]

(6) Gaelcarraig Park in Newcastle was grand. It was quiet at first and then it became a bit of a … Westside was kinda renowned for its eh joy ridin' an' criminality basically, so it got a bit kinda rough on the road, I'd say, from when I was about eight to about eighteen. It felt really, it was a really rough, an' kinda a lotta joy ridin', a lotta cars bein' burnt, lotta burglaries and things like that. An' it was known as the shithole of Galway for a while so but it's quiet now, it's really quiet an' so, well, as far as I know or nearly so. [male informant, aged 29, Newcastle/Westside; CGCSE: GAL-NC-ST016]

As can be seen from (5) and (6), the extraction of attitudes and perceptions can be based on readily available or purpose-built corpus data, where frequent collocations within a certain search horizon of a particular place name help to uncover conventional cognitive-conceptual evaluations associated with certain areas, places, and spaces within a city. Alternatively, intra-urban perceptions and attitudes such as in (5) and (6) can be extracted from target-oriented and more quantitatively laid out perception studies conducted among samples of speakers from various parts of Galway in a fashion similar to that applied in studies of Irish English in Dublin (e.g. Lonergan 2016; Schulte 2019; Lucek and Garnett 2020). Ideally, however, these two types of perception studies should complement each other in order to produce an accurate cognitive-conceptual picture of in-group (and out-group) perceptions of linguistic and sociocultural urban identity in Galway City.

## 17.6 Conclusion

From the previous discussion it is clear that the future(s) of Irish English research in Galway City will lie in the continuation of second-wave and third-wave sociolinguistic approaches to feature variability and identity construction on the one hand and on an expanded corpus of spoken and written Galway City English with further research on in-group cognitive-conceptual patterns on the other. What makes Irish English in Galway City a rewarding object of investigation is the persisting contact between the linguistic and semiotic systems of Irish and English that will continue to shape an increasingly multilingual group of speakers of western urban Irish English.

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